Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. II.—No. I. BOSTON, MASS., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1882. Whole No. 27.

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Read Liberty's splendid offer of premiums to new subscribers in another column.

"Leaves of Grass" is now sold openly by nearly all the Boston booksellers. We have won our victory, and the "guardians of Massachusetts morality" have ignominiously retreated. This is well; but much trouble would have been saved, if the cowardly Osgoods had only stood up in their shoes, instead of surrendering without a struggle.

The woman suffragists of Boston met at Mrs. Fenno Tudor's a few days ago, and voted, despite the recent declaration of the Democratic party in favor of woman suffrage, that it would be time enough to endorse that party when it had done substantial work for the reform in question. Ingratitude, thy name is woman!

Literature is about to be enriched by an unexpected treasure. Proudhon's family lately discovered among the manuscripts of that celebrated publicist a posthumous work, entitled, "Cæsarism and History." It is already in press, and will doubtless be before the public in a very short time. The eagerness with which the people of Continental Europe buy and read the works of Proudhon is highly creditable to them, and it will not be our fault if, before many years, the English speaking-peoples do not have a chance to similarly honor themselves. Neither France nor the whole world can cherish too carefully every word that was written by him whom the next century will probably rank as the foremost man of this.

General Ben Butler has the reputation of possessing a large amount of cheek, but he is by no means the cheekiest of the candidates for governor between whom Massachusetts voters are to choose this fall. The palm in that respect is unquestionably borne off by the most honest and estimable of them all, Charles Almy, of New Bedford, the candidate of the Prohibitory party, who, with an unapproachable sublimity of inconsistency, declares, in a letter accepting the nomination of a party which proposes to decide what men shall and shall not drink, that "the minimum of organized government and the maximum of self-government is to be encouraged." This is virtually a proposition to encourage men to govern themselves by prohibiting them from doing so, and is a fine specimen of the humors of politics.

The Providence "Journal" gave the last number of Liberty a half-column of attention, for which we are its debtor. Among other comments, it said, after quoting some of our criticisms of the State: "We do not think that the Rhode Island 'reformers' are quite educated up to this standard." How this may be we do not know. The "Journal" ought to be better posted than ourselves concerning the educational status of Rhode Island reformers. But this we can say,—that, after Massachusetts, Rhode Island is the banner state on our subscription list, and that no other city in the Union takes as many copies of Liberty as Providence itself. We are rapidly developing Anarchists in Little Rhody's bosom, and creating a constituency of very lively neighbors for the arrogant thieves who rule her through the columns of the "Journal."

A mission is in progress at St. Mary's Catholic Church in this city under the conduct of Fathers Hamilton and Lancake. "During the past week," says a Boston newspaper, "the fathers have labored with the young men of the parish, and the week for the young unmarried women commenced last evening." We know little about revivals, but strongly incline to the opinion that the week which "commenced last evening" will prove the more fruitful of the two.

The Liberal League is spending a tremendous amount of intellectual energy in an effort to induce the people to date their letters and papers and documents E. M. 82 instead of A. D. 1882. "Where now," asks Carlyle, "are the Hengsts and Alarics of our still-glowing, still-expanding Europe; who, when their home is grown too narrow, will enlist, and, like Fire-pillars, guide onward those superfluous masses of indomitable living Valor; equipped, not now with the battle-axe and war-chariot, but with the steam-engine and ploughshare? Where are they? — Preserving their Game!" Where now, asks Liberty, are the Paines and Jeffersons of our still-glowing, still-expanding America; who, when their fellows have become too wretched and down-trodden, will enlist to lift the yokes of poverty and tyranny from the neck of Industry; equipped, not with the bullet, or even with the ballot, but with reason and earnestness and printers' ink and peaceful rebellion and non-compliances? Where are they? — Changing the Calendar!

Time brings queer changes. The Democratic party, heretofore supposed to be the bitterest foe of woman suffrage, has embodied it in its platform in Massachusetts, and even declared unequivocally in favor of woman's equality with man in the broadest sense. If the Democratic party ever gives woman the ballot, it will be the most unselfish deed ever done by a political organization, for it will amount to nothing less than suicide. Immediately woman gets the right to vote, she will use it to thwart and overturn every principle that a follower of Jefferson is supposed to believe in. She will vote for prohibition against free rum, for protection against free trade, for a State religion against free thought, for Comstockism against a free press, for indissoluble marriage against free love, and for greenbackism against free money; in short, she will do nearly everything that is outrageous and tyrannical and absurd. For, even to a greater extent than the men, she believes that all wrongs can be set right by statute. It will be a cold day for Liberty when woman takes the reins of power. Not that Liberty is entirely without friends among the ladies. In the ranks of Liberty's champions there are not a few genuine Amasons, who may be depended upon in all emergencies. But, generally speaking, the feminine mind seems to have no conception of freedom or human rights, and believes thoroughly in flat morality. What does this teach us? Simply that, while woman should be denied no real right, she should be entrusted with no arbitrary power. Give woman equality with man, by all means; but do it by taking power from man, not by giving it to woman.

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BOSTON, MASS., OCTOBER 14, 1882.

"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions."—PROUDHON.

Bound Volumes of Liberty.

We have for sale three handsomely-bound copies of the first volume of Liberty. As the number who desire them is large, we have determined, not as a matter of equity, but as a means of voluntary taxation of those best able to give us a helping hand, to award the volumes to the three persons sending in the highest bids for them prior to the next issue of the paper. At that time the successful bidders will be notified, and, on receipt of the sums offered, the books will be forwarded.

Liberty the Mother of Order.

It is gratifying to be informed, as we have been, by many of our patrons now renewing their subscriptions that they have already come to see plainly what we are driving at and are more and more deeply interested to follow us.

When our little sheet was first sent out to do battle for reform we naturally expected to be immediately confronted by such superficial objections as these: "You are subversive of law and order;" "your system invites complete social chaos;" "you destroy without offering anything upon which to build anew;" "you offer nothing in the place of government;" "you are all sail and no compass," *etc.* Of course no keen student of social science could descend to such unscientific objections, but a little reform sheet like Liberty has not chiefly to deal with trained students of sociology, but with the average citizen of a "practical" world.

Not a few of our readers, however, are already beginning to see that so far from being subversive of law and order are we that our mission is really to establish law and order in the place of the prevailing social chaos which goes by that name. There is no such frivolous catch-word in the air to-day to gull the weak and unwary as this canting whine of "law and order." Law! yes: but what law? The law of nature as developed out of a rational analysis of social forces and based upon the sovereignty of the individual, or some law manufactured for designing ends before we were born and without our consent? Is law a thing to be enacted by rogues in caucus, and executed by force upon the unwilling, or is law a principle of nature,—a thing that *is*, and that cannot be *made*. As brave old Lysander Spooner says, it is absurd to talk about "making" laws. Laws *are*, and the only right of a human being is to search after them and obey them for himself, leaving others to do the same, or contrarywise, at their own cost.

And order, too,—all reverence for order! But *whose* order? Is it the order of nature, meaning the harmony begotten of a true knowledge of social forces and their healthy coördination in practical life, or is it the order concocted by ward politicians within walls reeking with bribery and open-handed corruption in the interest of social slave-masters? Order means nothing until you institute a correct philosophical standard of order. The thing now called order does not even protect life; witness the pauper rate in Great Britain, and all the murderous results of capital's sway over labor. If the prevailing order *does* protect property, it simply protects robbery; it does not protect honest possession of the fruits of labor by those who create it, but rather despoils producers of what they produce, which is virtually the whole scheme of property.

Now, so far from not offering anything in the place of what is now falsely called government, we have something very tangible to offer,—something very rational, practical, and easy of application. We offer coöperation. We offer reciprocity. We offer associative combination. We offer non-compulsive organization. We offer every possible method of voluntary social union by which men and women may act together for the furtherance of well-being. In short, we offer voluntary scientific socialism in the place of the present compulsory unscientific organization which characterizes the State and all its ramifications.

Is not this government in its only rational sense? If this be chaos, then there is no natural law. If men and women can be governed under arbitrary compulsion, and cannot be governed under the very law of their own being, then the universe is a failure, and a type of reformer above the level of the Czar of Russia and John Kelly has little left to live for.

There are three prevailing social drifts now at work. The first is the State, or the present order of political government, whose synonym is usurpation. The second is socialism,—that phase of it now manifest in the Social Democracy of Europe and which is only a modification of the State. The third is revolutionary socialism, and to that phase Liberty is allied. The revolutionary socialist, like the ordinary socialist, believes in the substitution of integral organization for the old political organization, with *this* distinction (and it is an irreconcilable one),—namely, that the old order must not be remodeled, but utterly overthrown and discarded, and that in all subsequent social coöperation no manner of organization or combination whatsoever shall be binding upon any individual without his consent. Revolutionary socialism denies the right of a majority to coerce a minority. It insists upon the absolute sovereignty of every individual. Its synonym is Liberty.

But it has a system as rational, just, and potent as nature. It aims at true law and order. It is *constructive* at every point where it is *destructive*. It is the very antipode of chaos. It is an indefatigable builder. Follow us patiently, friends, and our light will begin to reveal to you the chaos existing in the high and holy places where you have been falsely educated to believe in a quack God, bogus government, unlawful law, and masked disorder.

"Dooty."

The New York papers report that the policemen in charge of Central Park look upon the ragged urchins who frequent that public ground as "suspicious characters," and in numerous instances have proceeded to "club them out," while other children, well dressed, are left to romp at pleasure. And, when these guardians of the public good have been remonstrated with, they have either resented with indignation the "impudent interference of a mere civilian," or have protested that they were "only doing their dooty."

'Tis but a sample of the solemn farce being daily enacted throughout the so-called civilized world.

All the tyrants, great and small, are "only doing their dooty."

And what is remarkable in it all is that so many otherwise intelligent people are resting under the delusion that the preservation of needful order depends on their adhesion to this old tyrannizing system. Half asleep, they indulge in the dream that they are "only doing *their* dooty."

We are, however, convinced that the great mass of them are, at the present time, not without a suspicion, at least, that something is radically wrong. They are striking out in many directions, hoping, as we suppose, to hit the evil in the eye.

For instance, there is just now in this country a great outcry against "boss rule." Everybody appears to be down on it. The Conklings and the Camerons are being swept away in the name of the outraged people who are clamorous for their freedom. They will not be dictated to. They want freedom of opinion and freedom of action. All of which is very commendable. The spirit of it is excellent.

But the question is, Will it go far enough and strike deep enough? Will it cover over and take in all the bosses? Will it plough up the old soil and sow new seed? Does it mean to be thorough? Will it establish freedom in reality, or will it only daily along, suppressing these comparatively inoffensive party bosses, while the vast system of governmental bossing is to run on indefinitely?

We realize the slow pace at which the world moves, and so are not sanguine that this incipient rebellion against the tyrannous rule of "bosses" will ripen into an immediate and fruitful harvest. But, as we have said, the spirit of it is good, and it affords us the opportunity to meet those freedom-shrieking rebels on their own ground, where we shall strive to show them that, if they mean to steadily maintain it, they must conquer more. As it is, they have only run out for a little skirmish. The great battle is still impending.

Therefore, to the enemies of "boss rule" we say: What else have we everywhere established from president down to policeman? If it be not "boss rule," what is it? When you come seriously to ponder this question, we declare to you that you will see that our entire governmental system is a system of irresponsible bossing. Sometimes this boss is one individual, and sometimes many. It is whoever or whatever is in power. Now it is the Republican party that is bossing us. When we get to the point beyond which endurance is impossible, what shall we do? Why, change bosses,—if we are able. For a Republican we shall try a Democrat; and so, swinging back and forth, get matters eased up as much as we can.

But always a "boss," who, under the specious but effective plea, of doing his "dooty," is entitled to defy and drive us like so many dumb sheep, fit only to be fleeced. What a scandalous intimation of power was that indulged in by the judge in the Star Route cases, when he said to the jury that he might yet decide to shut them up on bread and water, and so force them into a verdict. A jury thus assailed, had its members been in any degree alive to their rights as freemen, would have instantly declined further service. Such a threat should only have been scorned and defied. But no; the judge could claim that he, under the common law, was "only doing his dooty." And it was the traditional "dooty" of the jury ignobly to submit.

What is the remedy?

The remedy is for the people to refuse as individuals to delegate a power which cannot at once be confronted by every individual interested, and revoked. There is, in one sense, plenty of bossing to be done in this world, but not against the will or desire of any the humblest person. Personal government is the only true government, but the difference between a free people, so governed, and a slave people governed, is that the government instituted by the former proceeds only by the constant consent of all interested, while the latter is carried on in the name, either of one absolute monarch, or, as we of America say, in the name of "the majority," whether those who are governed consent or not. We have an idea in this country that the majority can do Liberty no wrong. Laws a king might proclaim in the interest of tyranny become, we seem to think, *not* tyrannical if they are only enacted in due process of our majority legislation. The thing done does not so much signify with us. We pin our salvation to a *form of doing*. Our "ballot stuffing" Carlyle roared at throws a sanctity over every kind of iniquity. We lose sight of the crime enacted, seeing only that it was found out by our Republican formula, and that there is a party in the country strong enough to enforce it. Carlyle was far nearer right when he lustily called for the "Able-man,"—the man with sense enough always to know what is the right thing to do, and bent only on honestly doing it, let the people give thanks or howl.

Here are three conceptions:

1. The right thing without regard to method.

2. The method at all hazard without regard to the thing done.

3. The method and the thing done inseparably connected.

The first may summarize the doctrine of the Carlyle school; the second is our Republican dogma; the third is the gospel of Liberty.

As to the first, while we unhesitatingly declare it to be infinitely better than the second, it is simply a question as to whether it is to the advantage of the people to have their work done for them irrespective of their wish or consent, or to have it done by their free consent and earnest desire. Waiving here the question of right, we simply raise the test of advantage. We ask, is it better for the people to have the right thing done by despotism or by freedom? And our response simply is that it must certainly be best for the people to have exercise in the doing of the right thing for themselves. This must be true, if growth, self-reliance, and individual capacity are alone attainable through individual experience and culture.

Therefore, Liberty holds steadfastly to the *method* of *freedom*. The right thing, in fact, can only be done by that method. Whatever despotism does has a false foundation. In the end it fails for want of support. It has no basis in the character of the people. It has not grown out of them, is not a part of them; they do not understand or appreciate it. It fails, and must one day give place to what the people freely build. Not that freedom makes no mistakes. No one affirms this. But the mistakes of freedom are its education and its discipline. By its mistakes, as by its successes, the people grow in strength and improve in capable action.

Hence Liberty stands not for result alone, as this is impossible. The true result is obtainable only by the true method.

The idiotic delusion to which this country is for the time being wedded,—that of sticking to the formula of majority rule, let the result be what it may—is the most ignoble thing done in freedom's name that the sun shines upon. For it places Right, Justice, Individual or Personal Freedom in the background. Under its sway the most devilish things are not only possible, but can be bolstered up and made respectable. When they become "the law," we enshrine them in a sacred circle within which no one may set foot but at his peril.

Shift and explain the facts as you may, the most conspicuous fact of all remains,—namely, that the whole system is an arbitrary one, founded not in free choice, but relying on force, which good and honest citizens for the most part support only because they have an inherited instinct that they are thereby doing their duty. They will say: "Certainly, we are for liberty. But, then, society needs some safeguards, and the worst government is better than no government." It is their duty, therefore, to maintain the government, whatever that government may be.

Now, we suggest to all such persons that, if they are seriously in love with Liberty, it is wholly wrong in them to contribute their influence and their means to perpetuate organizations whose very inception is a blow aimed directly at the suppression of Liberty. Society—that is, the individuals composing society—must, indeed, have "safeguards." But the very first step of your despotic organization is to tear down all natural safeguards and place the individual wholly at the mercy of some instituted "boss." In Republican America, as in Autocratic Russia, that is the inevitable first step in what is called governmental organization. It is to establish a machine rule; and although, gentlemen, you may profess to play that machine in behalf of Liberty and good order, you can not give to it one solitary motion without defying Liberty and rendering *good* order impossible.

Grant, if you please, that the running of such a machine has in past times been a necessity; grant, even, that for some time yet for various causes it will necessarily be kept in motion: we are not discussing that point. But, we are talking to you who have advanced far enough into the light of Liberty to see that the "machine" in politics and "boss rule" are Liberty's enemies, to you who would earnestly do somewhat to deliver the country from all manner of oppressions. What ought *you* to do to be consistent with your aspirations?

Shall we answer for you? Then, we will say: *Leave the organization of despotism, and turn to the organization of freedom.*

Liberty asks you to see your *duty* in that direction.

Give no more support to bosses, low or high, who are "only doing their dooty" when they invade every personal right a free people may claim.

Under the old system the people surrender all rights, their whole freedom, into the hands of governmental officials, and receive all they get in return that bears the semblance of freedom as something *granted* to them. We know well enough and do not dispute that in modern times and in this country much is "granted." But what is "granted" may also be *withheld*, if the ruling "boss" has the disposition and the power. And much *is* withheld, even here, as it is. Every individual may be said to have a certain length of rope, but he is fastened thereto; and, when the "boss" requires either his person or his property, he is hauled in, and must surrender both,—and that not because he is a criminal charged with an offence, but because the "powers that be," to whom he is in "dooty" bound to submit, have so willed it.

But under the new system, under the organizations freedom shall invent and maintain, nothing is surrendered, all rights are reserved, and Liberty to maintain itself does not invade itself. A society so constructed, acting not under the rule of force, but stimulated by the intelligent appreciation by all its members of their common interests, furnishes the only example of *good* order, *true* prosperity, and *enduring* peace which it is possible to conceive.

In its realm will be found no officials ignorantly and inhumanly "doing their dooty." "Dooty" will become duty, and duty be transfigured into Love.

"Unhappy Ireland."

We might as well speak plainly and say that the Irish Land League, of once glorious promise, has degenerated into a miserable, humiliating farce, and what there is left of it is not worth holding a second-class Irish wake over. We regret exceedingly to say this, for at one time, while the mammoth no-rent strike was in full blast, Ireland seemed destined to score a victory in modern social methods which would have revolutionized reform and struck with sure death landlordism and politics at one blow.

The cause of Ireland's lamentable defeat may be plainly traced to a few cowardly nuisances who have figured as "leaders." The first of these is God, Patrick Ford's man, who as usual has gone over to the heaviest battalions and left the poor Irish to wrestle on in the toils of the landlords and that army of blood-sucking priests who, although the Irish do not like to be told of it, are the bottom enemies of Ireland.

The second nuisance, not divine but human, is Charles Stewart Parnell, the distinguished parliamentarian of Kilmainham-compact notoriety. A more contemptible piece of political small ware never sold out a confiding nation of poor, outraged, man-worshipping dupes.

The third nuisance is Michael Davitt. This once brave Alaric of the cause, who sent terror to the oppressor by declaring all rent to be an immoral tax, proves to be made of such soft stuff that all his moral and mental stamina can be wiped out between the good cloth and respectability of Parnell and the infantile sophistry of Henry George.

There are many more nuisances on the stage of this melancholy Irish farce, but the point which we wish to get at is that there is little hope for Ireland until her people become so far enlightened that they can keep God and the priests out of reform, and learn to stop the man-worship of leaders. God is a politician who invariably goes back on the people, and the priests are fat vultures who live on the success of the State and all it portends for despotism.

When the Irish people get so far emancipated that they will stop rushing servilely with their pennies, now as Parnell men, now as Davitt men, and learn to be independent, self-reliant individuals, no such righteous move as the mighty no-rent resolve can be successfully misguided to its ruin by individual corruption, cowardice, or stupidity.

A Religion of Hypocrisy and Barbarism.

From the Archbishop of York's letter to the Bishops of his diocese.

Anarchy in Egypt meant danger to that wide Empire which we have received as a trust, and which we may not abandon; and our war against anarchy was an inevitable war. Through God's great goodness the struggle of a few hours has scattered the rebels, has made order and freedom possible in Egypt, has rescued that country from the impending loss of next year's crops, and has so prevented its ruin. Mourning as we do those who have fallen for their country, we are thankful that the skilful dispositions of our commander have saved many lives, and have preserved a great city from irreparable ravages. For these mercies, as for many others vouchsafed to us by the Most High, we owe Him thanks and praise. At the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury I invite you to direct that next Sunday shall be observed as a day of thanksgiving in all churches and chapels in our diocese.

From the cable despatches to the daily newspapers.

The Cairo correspondent of the Cologne Gazette declares that the Egyptian wounded were murdered by the British in the trenches at Tel-el-Kebir, long after all resistance had ceased.

A letter from a non-commissioned officer of the 42d regiment, published in the London Times, says the orders were to spare none of the enemy, and to bayonet every one of them, as they would shoot the soldiers treacherously if the latter passed them.

Law and Authority.

IV.

[Translated from "Le Révolté."]

If we consider the millions of laws that govern humanity, we see at once that they may be subdivided into three great categories: protection of property, protection of persons, protection of the government. And, in analyzing these three categories, we arrive, in regard to each of them, at this logical and necessary conclusion: *Uselessness and perniciousness of the Law.*

As for the protection of property, socialists know what that is. The laws on property are not made to guarantee to the individual or to society the enjoyment of the products of their labor. They are made, on the contrary, to strip the producer of a portion of what he produces and to assure to a few the portion thus stripped from the producers or from the entire society. When the law establishes the right of Mr. So-and-so to a house, for example, it establishes his right, not to a cottage which he has built himself, or to a house which he has erected with the aid of a few friends; no one would have disputed this right if such had been the case. The law, on the contrary, establishes his right to a house which *is not* the product of his labor, first, because he has had it built by others to whom he has not paid the full value of their labor, and, second, because the house represents a social value which he could not have produced himself: the law establishes his right to a portion of that which belongs to everybody and to nobody in particular. The same house, built in the interior of Siberia, would not have the value that it has in a great city, and the latter value results, as we know, from the labor of fifty generations who built the city, adorned it, provided it with water and gas, fine streets, universities, theatres and warehouses, and railroads and highways radiating from it in all directions. In recognizing, then, the right of Mr. So-and-so to a house in Paris, London, Rouen, &c., the law appropriates to him—unjustly—a certain portion of the products of the labor of entire humanity. And it is just because this appropriation is a crying injustice (all other forms of property have the same character) that a whole arsenal of laws and a whole army of soldiers, policemen, and judges are necessary to maintain it against common sense and the sentiment of justice inherent in humanity.

Well, half of our laws—the civil codes of every country—have no other object than that of maintaining this appropriation, this monopoly, for the benefit of a few against entire

humanity. Three-fourths of the cases passed upon by the courts are only quarrels arising between monopolists, — two robbers disputing over their plunder. And no small portion of our criminal laws have also the same object, their purpose being to keep the laborer subordinate to the employer in order to secure to the latter the exploitation of the former.

As for guaranteeing to the producer the products of his labor, there is not a law which undertakes it. That is a matter so simple and so natural, so much a part of the customs and habits of humanity, that the Law has not even considered it. Open brigandage, with weapons in hand, belongs no longer to our century; no laborer in these days ever disputes with another over the product of his labor; if there is any misunderstanding between them, they settle it without recourse to the Law, by addressing themselves to a third party; and the only man who now demands of another a certain portion of his product is the proprietor, who deducts in advance the lion's share. As for humanity in general, it universally respects the right of each to what he produces, not needing special laws to compel it to such a course.

All these laws upon property, which fill huge volumes of codes and are the delight of the lawyers, having, as we have seen, no other object than that of practising the unjust appropriation of the products of the labor of humanity by certain monopolists, there is no excuse for their existence, and the revolutionary socialists are fully determined to wipe them out on the day of the Revolution. And we can, indeed, with entire justice, make a complete *auto-da-fé* of *all* the laws in relation to the so-called "rights of property," of all property titles, of all the archives, — in short, of everything referring to this institution soon to be considered as a humiliating stain upon the history of humanity equally with the slavery and servitude of centuries gone by.

What we have just said of the laws concerning property fully applies to this second category of laws, — the laws serving to maintain the government, or constitutional laws.

Here again is a whole arsenal of laws, decrees, ordinances, opinions, &c., serving to protect the various forms of representative government (by delegation or by usurpation) under which human societies still struggle. We know very well (the Anarchists have often enough demonstrated it in their incessant criticisms of the various forms of government) that the mission of *all* governments, monarchical, constitutional, and republican, is to protect and to maintain by force the privileges of the possessing classes, — aristocracy, priesthood, and *bourgeoisie*. A good third of our laws, — the "fundamental" laws, laws on taxation, on custom-houses, on the organization of ministries and their departments, on the army, the police, the church, &c. (and there are tens of thousands in every country) — have no other object than to maintain, rehabilitate, and develop the governmental machine, which serves in its turn almost exclusively to protect the privileges of the possessing classes. Analyze all these laws, observe their action day by day, and you will perceive that there is not a single one worthy of preservation, beginning with those which deliver the communes, bound hand and foot, to the parish-priest, the big *bourgeois* of the locality, and the sub-prefect, and ending with this famous constitution (the nineteenth or twentieth since 1789), which gives us a Chamber of idiots and petty speculators preparing the way for the dictatorship of the adventurer, Gambetta, if not for the government of a crowned cabbage-head.

In short, regarding all these laws there can be no doubt. Not only the Anarchists, but even the more or less revolutionary of the *bourgeois*, agree in this, — that the only use that can be made of all the laws concerning the organization of government is to make a bonfire of them.

There remains the third category of laws, the most important, since to it attaches the greatest number of prejudices, — the laws concerning the protection of persons, the punishment and prevention of "crimes." In fact, this category is the most important, because whatever consideration the Law may enjoy is due to the belief that laws of this sort are absolutely indispensable to the maintenance of security in our societies. These are the laws which are developed from the nucleus of customs useful to human societies and taken advantage of by the rulers to sanctify their sway. The authority of the chiefs of tribes, of the wealthy families in the communes, and of the king was based upon the judicial functions which they exercised; and even to the present day, whenever the necessity of government is spoken of, its function as supreme judge is tacitly understood to be referred to. "Without government men would eat each other's throats," says the village philosopher. "The final purpose of every government is to give twelve honest jurors to every accused person," said Burke.

Well, in spite of all the prejudices existing in this matter, it is high time for the Anarchists to declare boldly that this category of laws is as useless and pernicious as the preceding ones.

In the first place, as for the so-called "crimes," assaults upon persons, it is known that two-thirds and often even three-fourths of all these "crimes" are inspired by the desire to get possession of the wealth belonging to some one. This immense category of so-called "crimes and offences" will disappear on the day when private property shall cease to exist. "But," we shall be told, "there will always be brutes to assail the lives of citizens, to deal a knife-thrust in every quarrel, to avenge the slightest offence by a murder, if there are no laws to restrain them and no punishments to withhold them." That is the refrain sung to us as soon as we call in question society's right to punish.

Nevertheless, as to that, there is today one thing well established: The severity of punishment does not diminish the number of "crimes." In fact, hang, quarter, if you will, the assassins, the number of assassinations will not diminish by a single one. On the contrary, abolish the death penalty, and there will not be a single assassination the more; there will be even fewer. Statistics establish this. But let the harvest be good, let bread be cheap, let the weather be fine, and the number of assassinations will immediately diminish; statistics again prove that the number of crimes increases and diminishes with the price of provisions and the severity of the season. Not that all assassinations are prompted by hunger. Not at all; but, when the harvest is good and provisions are easily obtainable, men, gayer, less wretched than usual, do not give way to the darker passions and feel no desire to plunge a knife into the heart of one of their fellows from trivial motives.

Further, it is known also that the fear of punishment has never deterred a single assassin. He who goes forth to kill his neighbor from vengeance or from poverty does not reason overmuch about the consequences; and never assassin who had not the firm conviction that he would escape prosecution. There are a thousand other reasons besides, which we might adduce here,—our space is limited,—but let each one reason on this subject for himself, let him analyze crimes and penalties, their motives and consequences, and, if he knows how to reason uninfluenced by preconceived ideas, he will necessarily reach this conclusion:

Saying nothing of a society in which man will receive a higher education, in which the development of all his faculties and the possibility of enjoying them will secure him so many pleasures that he will not care to lose them by a murder,—saying nothing of the society of the future, even in our present society, even with these sad products of the misery which we see today in the pot-houses of the large cities, on the day when *no punishment* shall be inflicted upon assassins the number of assassinations will not increase by a single one; and it is highly probable that, on the contrary, it will diminish by all those cases now due to second offenders who have been brutalized in prisons.

We are continually told of the benefits of the law and the beneficent effects of penalties. But have those who tell us these things ever tried to strike a balance between these benefits which they attribute to Law and to penalties, and the degrading effect of these penalties on humanity? Let them only calculate the sum total of bad passions awakened in humanity by the atrocious punishments formerly inflicted in our streets. Who, then, nursed and developed the instincts of cruelty in man (instincts unknown even to the monkeys, man having become the most cruel animal on earth), if not the king, the judge, and the priest, armed with the law, who made him tear flesh into shreds, pour burning pitch into wounds, dislocate limbs, crush bones, and saw men in two to maintain their authority? Let them only estimate the torrent of depravity shed into human society by informers, favored by judges and rewarded with the ringing coins of government, under pretext of aiding in the discovery of crimes. Let them go into prison and there study what man becomes when deprived of liberty, shut up with other depraved wretches who imbue each other with all the corruption and all the vices which ooze from the prisons of today, and let them only remember that, the more we reform these institutions, the more detestable they are, all our modern and model penitentiaries being a hundred times more abominable than the dungeons of the Middle Ages. Let them consider, finally, what corruption, what depravity of mind is maintained in humanity by this idea of *obedience* (the essence of the law), of chastisement, of authority having the right to chastise and to judge regardless of our conscience and the esteem of our friends, of an executioner, of a jailer, of a common informer,—in short, of all these attributes of Law and Authority. Let them consider all this, and they will certainly agree with us when we say that the Law inflicting penalties is an abomination which ought to cease to exist.

Moreover, non-policed and, consequently, less depraved peoples have clearly understood that he who is called a "criminal" is simply an unfortunate,—not to be flogged, chained, or put to death on the scaffold or in prison, but to be comforted by the most fraternal cares, by treatment as an equal, by association with honest people. And in the next revolution we hope to hear this cry go forth:

Burn the guillotines; tear down the prisons; banish the judge, the policeman, the informer,—as unclean a crew as the earth ever held; treat as a brother him who has been driven by passion to do evil to his neighbor; above all, take away from the great criminals, those ignoble products of the idleness of the *bourgeoisie*, the possibility of arraying their vices in seductive garb, — and be sure that our society will then be signalized by very few crimes. That which maintains crime (beside idleness) is Law and Authority: the law on property, the law on government, the law on penalties and offences, and the authority which assumes to make these laws and apply them.

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SUPPLEMENT.

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BOSTON, MASS., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1882.

HENRY GEORGE EXAMINED.*

Should Land be Nationalized or Individualized?

BY J. K. INGALLS.

Editor Irish World:—However interesting for the moment may be the questions as to whether Messrs. Parnell and Davitt are acting in unity, and as to whether Mr. George has captured the latter gentleman, a far graver question must ultimately present itself in connection with the disposition and final control of the land. Among the advocates of the "new departure" I have observed but one who has seemed to apprehend the exact issue,—viz., your correspondent, "W. M. C." "Phillip," indeed, apprehends that the solution must have a more individualistic application than is necessarily embraced in the term "nationalization of the land," but, until he fully develops his ideas, I will suspend judgment on them.

Now, potentially, there can be no difference between monopoly under lease and monopoly under freehold, as we shall see on careful investigation. But let us first ascertain what this phrase really means. Does it mean land for the whole people? Then who would want to rent or let? Does it mean ownership by the government or State? If so, it is not the solution, but only the stating, of the land problem. At the outset this is the theory of all governments.

When William of Normandy defeated Harold, he, as head of the State, assumed control of the land and parcelled it out to his bandit lieutenants and favorites. The English monarchs did the same in Ireland.

In ancient Rome the nation claimed the domain; but after a few hundred years it was all in the hands of a few patricians and military chieftains. The land in these United States, at the adoption of the Constitution, was mainly *national domain*. Less than a hundred years sufficed to place it in the hands of speculators, favored corporations, and domestic and foreign landlords. Less than one-quarter is now held by the government, and but a small proportion by actual cultivators, and even one-half of that is mortgaged to money-lenders beyond all hope of redemption.

I shall be told that it is not intended to allow private property in land at all, and that hence no monopolistic accumulation could arise. Well, then, there can be no public property in land; or, if so called or held, it must be with this sweeping limitation,—that the public, State, or government can never transfer it to private control. What I wish to indicate here is that no step whatsoever towards securing the individual people in their "rights of soil" can be taken without "limitation of the principle of property" in its application to the land.

But I shall be told also that for the individual to lease his land from the State or government will obviate all danger that any person will be excluded from cultivating the soil who honestly seeks to do so. This would be satisfactory if it were proposed, as "W. M. C." proposes, to limit lease-holds so that all could have opportunity.

Without such limitation lettings would have to be made at auction; and it would be no more difficult for the millionaire to bid off all the leases of a section, township, or county than to buy up all the fees simple. Indeed, it would be far easier, for it would require him to invest none of his capital in land, as now. To nationalize the land in any such sense as that would help no poor man to a piece of land, but would only subject labor to dependence on a speculating and adventurer class instead of an hereditary landlord, and upon the favors of a partisan *bossism* instead of a foreign government.

We should have our "seventy-thousand-acre farms" run by "produce kings," aided by machinery and "transient help" in seed time and harvest, resulting in the ultimate exhaustion of the soil and the reduction of labor to the tramp state. Our stock-jobbing system would be mercilessly applied here, and the condition of the poor, by lack of opportunity for self-employment, would be rendered constantly worse and worse instead of being improved.

I do not mean in any degree to intimate that Mr. Davitt or Mr. George contemplates any such results, but this is the logical outcome to any plan of occupancy which does not positively assure the individual right to enter upon and cultivate the land necessary to his sustenance, and that without accounting to landlord or government official. I am gratified that the "Irish World" has not committed itself to any plan which does not effectually realize this aim.

"Rent," according to Mr. Davitt, "is an immoral tax," and, according to Mr. George, is "the price of monopoly," and, whether paid to a single or to a collective landlord, is unchanged in its nature.

In view of the brave and noble work which Mr. George has done and is still doing for the cause of land reform, it pains me to say that he does not seem to have appreciated his own words, much less comprehended the clear-cut definition of Mr. Davitt, and, as to the twin blasphemy of usury, not to have apprehended it at all. Even as late as March 10, 1882, he speaks of the increase of rent with the growth of society as "a most beautiful evidence of creative design."

In so late a number of the "Irish World" as July 8th, in the report of his Dublin lecture, after reiterating that the present agitation "means land for the whole people—every man, woman, and child, rich and poor," a "solution which gives to every man that which he fairly earns," he gives utterance to such inconsistent economic twaddle as this, saying it is "Michael Davitt's plan:" "To solve the land question and the labor question it is merely necessary [not to nationalize the land] to take for the benefit of the *whole people* those fruits coming from the land *which are not due to the exertions of labor or use of capital of those who are engaged in using it.*" Doubtless, Mr. George would be unable to find even in Ireland an instance where, the landlord being a judge, anything more than these fruits were taken as rent. The only difference between this plan, which Mr. George was careful to state was *not* "Mr. Davitt's particularly" (I should hope not), and current landlordism is that in one instance those fruits go to a class, and in the other to the whole people; in other words, to the ruling political party or administration. He does not stop to consider that this circumstance would in no sense change the *immoral nature* of the tax, however it might mitigate its public impolicy. As to the portion of fruits which are to go to the use of capital employed in cultivating the land, it would be hopeless to find any farmer or operator in any field of industry to admit that more was now received than was their due. Political economists do not admit any such thing, and we look through "Progress and Poverty" in vain to find any such intimation from Mr. George.

That he aims at the same general result as other land reformers, I have no shadow of doubt; but his premises as to the use of capital and its reproductive power, together with his theory of rent—that it is the result of something produced by the land without labor,—is wholly unsupported by any known facts; and his plan of taxing back what is wrongfully wrung from labor under this false pretence can but prove delusive. If successful as a tax, it would to that extent prove useless as a measure of equity. If successful, as he conceives, in giving every one a foothold on God's footstool, it would cease to yield any revenue whatever, and thus prove self-destructive, for no one not deprived of land by law or force would pay rent to government or landlord.

The farther discussion of the question I have put in the form of

DIALOGUE.

JONATHAN—Good morning, George. I am glad you have called. I am becoming deeply interested in the land question. To me it seems of importance to other countries as well as to Ireland, and that we cannot fully sympathize with the movement there until we understand it as a problem of world-wide application.

GEORGE—You cannot be interested in a question of deeper importance, and you are right in thinking it a subject of universal concern. The monopoly of the land in every country lies at the foundation of class domination and of the poverty and industrial subjection which prevail widely even in this land of civil and political freedom. Private property in land, whether under inheritance or commercial traffic, necessarily ends, sooner or later, in its absorption into the hands of a small and privileged class, while the majority of the cultivators, and, indeed, all workers, will be reduced to the condition of tenants, wage-workers, and tramps.

J.—That is also my thought, although as to private property in land I am not certain it could not be so defined and guarded as to make it operate in favor of equal opportunity and equal security. For instance, here I own forty acres. This would interfere with no one's opportunity if some were not allowed to buy up hundreds and thousands of acres, not for the purpose of cultivating or occupying, but to hold them against the poor and homeless, in order that they may tax the toil applied in their cultivation and prevent those who need from going upon them and making homes.

G.—I see you have not studied this land question in all its phases. Private property means property, and, if you attempt to guard or control it, it ceases to be such. I think nationalization of the land the only practical solution of the question, and that can be most readily effected by taxing back the value of the land—*i. e.*, the rent which it will bring—for the benefit of the whole people.

J.—The nationalization of the land in a comprehensive sense is a thing generally admitted, I think. No one disputes that the land of any country belongs to the whole people of that country. The only question is, how can the principle be applied to protect the individual in his natural right of access to his normal environment so as not to invalidate the right of "eminent domain," which is exercised more or less widely and wisely by the governments of all countries, and which by the genius of our laws is supposed to reside in the whole people? The *whole people cannot be evicted*. It is only by allowing the *individual* to be evicted and debarred from his natural inheritance that society can be endangered by land monopoly. Society has, therefore, an undoubted right to prohibit the occupancy by any person of such extent of the common inheritance as would crowd or exclude the weakest member from his foothold on the soil.

Whether the occupant holds his house as property, contributing his share of the public burden in the form of a tax, or as a tenant and contributing under the form of rent, would seem to matter little so long as the large occupancy of the richer and stronger did not imperil the opportunity of the poor and weak. By the late mention of a book I have not yet read, I judge that Mr. Wallace alone among English land reformers recognizes the necessity of *limitation of occupancy under leasehold*, and advocates features of *fixity* which will secure permanent holding and the inviolability of home to the family. As to letting rent go on, as under the landlord system, and then taxing it all back for the benefit of the whole people, I am unable to see how that plan can be made to harmonize with any democratic idea or fail to become a most dangerous experiment for any government to attempt. Industry at most should be taxed only for the reasonable necessities of government, and only after such necessity has risen and honest estimates made. To levy taxes for the accumulation of an indefinite sum, for which expenditures have to be found, is to create a fund inviting corruption and peculation and the betrayal of public trusts. No experience which any people in any time have had would justify it, and it could not logically be sanctioned by anyone but the advocate of the nationalizing of industry as well as of the land, and of wholesale governmental co-operation, which would make the government the employer of all labor and the determiner of all wages. I do not understand you to advocate this.

G.—Oh, no. However I may agree in the abstract with what you say, I cannot avoid seeing that it is private property in land which is the foundation of the evil. Abolish this by making the nation the owner, and, of course, no such thing as monopoly could exist. You must admit that to equally distribute the land among the people would be impossible, even if desirable, which it is not. Many want no land, but all are entitled to their share of what it produces, minus the amount justly due the cultivator, and minus the part rightfully due the capitalist, who has furnished or advanced means to furnish the stock and general plant employed in cultivating the land.

J.—And the cost of collecting and disbursing the same among the whole body of claimants?

G.—Yes; but that is unavoidable, and might be considered as compensated by relief from all other forms of taxation. I was going to add that rent is an economical fruit not the result of labor, but in addition to it, which the holder of land who cultivates it himself receives over and above the compensation of his labor just as truly as the idle landlord.

J.—Is rent at the same time, then, "an immoral tax," as Mr. Davitt asserts?

G.—Yes, when paid to landlords, but if paid to the government, and by that applied to the public welfare, each member of the community gets his just share of the natural produce of the land. Rent, economical rent at least, arises wholly from the different fertility of special soils, as explained by Ricardo and other political economists.

J.—I am not unaware of that, or of the use Malthus and other writers have made of this theory to satisfy the laborer that eviction and starvation are in the order of Providence and not the results of unjust and barbarous laws of tenure. That under any system of freedom of the land there would be a choice of locations and of qualities of the soil there can be no doubt; that parties would be willing to pay something for such choice there can be as little; but that such transactions would degenerate into fixed rents, without landlords, is hardly conceivable,—not certainly while as at present there is abundance of land of good quality to produce all that is necessary for the public consumption. The inhuman mockery of this plausible theory is all too apparent when we reflect that much of the best land even in Ireland is now untilled, while tenants are being evicted from the poorest because they will not pay a rent at a rate almost, if not quite, as high as the best land would command. Take away the writ of ejectment from the landlord, with which he is now clothed, and the constabulary and military which enable him to enforce it, and all the rent he would be able to collect from choice of place or preference of soils would not distress or seriously wrong any. Ownership under such limitation as would always leave land open to occupation, even of a poor quality, would remove distressful poverty far from the door of the industrious and frugal. The few who are lazy and improvident also would improve their condition as opportunities increased and as chances of doing better by idle scheming than by honest work decreased.

* The introductory portion of this article, preceding the dialogue, appeared originally in the "Irish World." The remainder was offered to the editor of that paper, but rejected by him.—EDITOR LIBERTY.

G. — It seems to me you treat the rent theory with too little consideration. It is very clear to me that rent only represents the difference between the productiveness of the best lands and that which is not sufficiently productive to yield rent. If the cultivator owns the land himself, this production in excess of that of poorer land which is cultivated is a gratuity to him which comes from Nature, and not from his toil, since he has toiled no harder than the man who has produced the smaller yield; and the only way to equalize the award of industry is to tax away this excess and give it to the public. The theory is itself so plain and generally accepted that I wonder you have the courage to dispute it. Mr. Mill denominates it the "*pons asinorum*."

J.—I am aware of it, but was always in a little doubt as to his application of the term. It might be that he meant such a bridge that all asses coming near would be sure to go over. It is not so much the theory as the use which is made of it that I deprecate. That there is difference in soils and in the desirableness of situations is true enough, but that such difference constitutes the entire rental is too absurd for serious discussion. For, then, if all soils were equally fertile, and all situations equally desirable, no rent could be obtained, however the land might be monopolized. This reminds me of the thesis of the metaphysician, that, if an ass were placed equi-distant between two equally attractive bundles of hay, he would die of starvation without being able to decide between the two. And, theoretically, this is all sound; practically, it is nonsense. In truth, rent arises from exactly the opposite direction to that here assumed. The amount any land will yield above the bare necessities of the cultivator becomes the measure of rent under land monopoly. And to apply the scheme of taxing back land values or rent for the public good means, if it means anything, the taxing of productive labor, all above a bare subsistence, and dividing it among all, whether workers or otherwise. The inequality which would arise from the working of lands of unequal fertility is greatly over-estimated, and it seems to me could be remedied by much easier and more natural methods. With a rational system of limited occupancy the restriction would embrace the consideration of superior fertility, and with more land of an inferior quality, with more varied crops and careful tillage, all serious inequalities would be overcome. There are also many compensations not discernible on the bare statement. The man with easier tillage and more productive soil will be able, doubtless, to obtain the same price for his grain or fruits as the man with poorer soil and shorter crops. He will leave somewhat more to exchange, and will with the excess purchase luxuries. This, while it may stimulate other industries, will not increase the cost of any necessaries to the neighbor. Another principle will also come in to render these inequalities less serious, if they could be regarded as serious at all. The principle of serving first the first comer would render all such inequality of little account. Only as population increased and progress in production advanced would the less desirable places come into requisition. The older and feeble would be in possession of the more productive, while the young and strong would attack the more unfriendly situation. The rent theory goes always upon the notion that the best land will keep producing bountifully year after year and generation after generation. This is folly. Land, however fertile when first taken up or when it first comes into the possession of the cultivator, will soon work down to a condition where it will do no more than is done for it. Its productiveness will then depend on what is done in the way of returning the elements of fertility and proper culture. The original difference of most cultivatable land will soon disappear under an equitable system of apportionment and intelligent use.

G.—Well, I came to read you a lecture on this subject, but you have read me one. I have never heard the "rent theory" attacked in this way before. If rent means only the different degrees of productiveness of different soils, there seems force in your suggestion that then no rent could be collected if all lands were equally desirable. But it is quite apparent that landlordism could not stand on any such position as that. I shall have to modify the statement by saying that under private ownership of the soil monopoly is enabled to exact the difference between the production of the best land and of such land as would be worked for its entire product without rent.

J.—Well, do you not see that you proceed in the wrong direction in drawing your conclusions? It comes really to an issue upon the question as to the "*natural* rate of wages." Adam Smith asserts that to be the entire labor product. Ricardo, the author of the "Theory of Rent," consistent with his theory, makes *bare subsistence the natural rate*. If this is true, as it must be, or the theory of rent be abandoned, then rent begins at this end and not at the excess end of the industrial problem, and does not absolutely require that any but the poorest lands be cultivated to produce a rent, if such lands will yield anything besides a bare subsistence to the cultivator.

Whether this theory would work if left to the operation of natural laws is another question, which it will be time enough to examine when our class laws are repealed and equal opportunities are enjoyed.

It would be very easy to show that commodities have a price only because there is a difference in their quality, etc. For instance, the price of potatoes is only the difference between the size and quality of those most desired and those which are so small and of so poor a quality that they can be had for nothing. But an economist who should attempt to incorporate such a circumstance into a basic economic principle, or seek to tax back the whole value thus found for the public use, would simply stultify himself.

Your mistake arises in supposing that there is such a thing as wealth produced without labor. With equal access to the earth and its natural and spontaneous productions, *the labor of gathering is all there is of production, and all that one man can justly exchange with another is the service he has rendered in such gathering*. And that, in the absence of monopoly, is all that can have price. How one who stands aloof and does nothing towards this gathering can claim a portion of the wages of the gatherer is not consistent with any conceivable system of equity. Only upon repaying the service rendered is he entitled to any interest in the thing harvested. and then he receives under an equitable exchange the same proportion according to his service as the man who gathered.

In this way the right of toil is essentially vindicated. The artisan, artist, teacher, *litterateur*, and follower of any trade or profession is protected, for each requires and usually consumes quite as much of the earth's products as the cultivator, and that, too, *without rendering disproportionate service*. Why, then, should the cultivator be taxed to benefit the others? Under free land or effective limitation of its ownership it would be optional with anyone of another calling who felt he was unfairly treated to plant and gather the fruits of the earth himself. All this would require no complicated scheme of taxation, no cumbersome official machinery, but simply a repeal of the class laws of tenure and the extension of the principle of limitation found so salutary in all other matters of civil rule.

G. — In view of all you have said, I still think that rent arises, to an extent, at least, from a "gratuity of Nature," and does belong properly to the whole people, and I see no better method than to tax away this gratuity from the landlord for the benefit of all.

J. — Without arguing that point further, it really appears to me that to estimate that as a gratuity which is acknowledged to be "the price of monopoly," is illogical in the last degree. If Nature has gratuities, it is for those who gather them. With equal opportunity, if any refuse or neglect to gather them (not infants or disabled), they have no equitable or moral claim upon that which others have gathered; for, by rendering a reciprocal service in that which they prefer to do, they can secure what they need. Whether any such thing as economic rent exists at all can only be determined in the absence of monopoly. That rents are greatly above any possible bid for choice, and wholly separate therefrom, is seen by the fact that, where highest, premiums are often paid on leaseholds. Taxation on a basis so indefinite, so wholly dependent on monopoly and the limit of endurance which the poor will sustain, is as devoid of economic judgment as of democratic simplicity.

G. — But an end must be put to the oppression of landlordism, and, as the land cannot be divided in such a way that all shall share its benefits, I know of no other way to make the thing equitable. The tendency of productive industry to consolidate itself in the hands of large corporations must necessarily extend to the cultivation of the land, where it is seen that a few large enterprises can be carried on much more successfully than many small ones. To divide up the land into small holdings would be detrimental to production, as is held by many writers.

J. — But many writers of eminence take an opposite view, citing France, Belgium, Switzerland, &c. But, though the issue is at least evenly contested, I do not propose to make a point of that. Even if wholly as you say, in its mere relation to production, it would not be conclusive. There are other and broader questions than that of large production. The maintenance of the fertility of the soil and the development and improvement of the individuals of the race are aims to which minor economies should be sacrificed, if need be.

G. — You will admit that the "division of labor" has exerted a powerful influence in that direction!

J. — Certainly; but you must also admit that, carried to the extremes which are exhibited in our large manufacturing establishments, it tends to reduce the worker to a mere appendage of a machine, and can have only one effect, — the deterioration of all manliness and the destruction of all self-respect. The pointing of a pin, as a continual employment for twelve or fourteen hours a day, can end only by reducing the man to an automaton. Large production of pins can well be sacrificed to a greater diversity of employment for the individual, and the development of a higher manhood; if not in the interest of simple political economy, at least in the higher interest of social economy.

G. — My plan embraces the idea of "giving to every man that which he fairly earns," and to capital what is "due for its use;" but that which goes as rent to the land I would have divided equally among all, since it belongs to all. Interest on money and profits derived from commodities in process of exchange and distribution are different in their nature from rent, and are realized "after labor has been duly rewarded."

J. — I am aware that economists seek to draw this distinction; but it is wholly technical. The union of capital with labor is no more complete than that of the land with labor. No essential difference can be shown between rent, interest, and profits.

Rent is the interest upon the money for which the hired land would exchange. Interest is the rent of the land which the money would purchase. It can make no possible difference to the farmer whether the sum he pays is paid as rent or as interest on the purchase money of his farm. Both the rent and interest may be loaded with expenses, taxes, repairs, &c., but stripped of all these, they are identical in this: *they are a tax upon the production of those who work for the benefit of those who do no work*. Profits are also loaded with costs of superintendence, expenses, &c. Stripped of "dues for service," however, they are identical with rent and interest, — an "immoral tax" on the productions of industry.

G. — But you forget that I assume that rent arises not from the labor, but independent of it, as taught by all political economists. And it is to tax that back for the benefit of all that I am contending. The question of interest and profits is held to be different from rent; but your way of putting it is novel. Yet it seems to me these are both right, and would work no great evil but for a monopoly of the land.

J.—But these, in common with rent, take so much from the annual production of labor, without any return whatsoever, when stripped of the extraneous portions with which they are usually connected. I think I have satisfactorily shown that rent arises in no such way as claimed, but wholly as "a monopoly price;" that wealth has no such power of increase as is claimed in justification of interest or usury; that trade has no power to multiply wealth, and that commerce can only add to the wealth of society by performing specific service in its production where and when needed for consumption, and that, when such service is fairly rewarded, nothing remains for profits but an immoral tax.

G.—But surely you do not propose to control interest and profits as well as rent? That would involve a degree of governmental supervision which I am sure would be repugnant to the spirit of any free people.

J.—Doubtless; but the dilemma is yours, not mine. I was just going to say that, waiving my objections to the "rent theory," admitting the power of wealth to increase of itself without labor, and of commodities in process of exchange to multiply on the hands of the holders,—though each proposition is vastly absurd,—the conclusion is unavoidable that interest on money and profits on trade are equally gratuities arising in Nature, to which all are equally entitled as well as to the economic rent arising from the land. How you can logically refuse to tax back the money and trade values, if any such naturally exist, as well as the land values is a matter of great wonder to me.

G.—But I see no other method of redressing the great wrong of land monopoly, and, that evil obviated, it seems to me that the other evils would remedy themselves, if they are evils.

J.—That is also my belief. In your plan, however, I see no certainty of remedying the basic evil. To do away with land monopoly only one course is open, — abolish it, as chattel slavery was abolished. Repeal all laws giving titles to land and make occupation the only valid tenure. This would do away with all discussion as to the nature of property in it. Production is the only thing which can be taxed. Improvements should be exempt, while coercive taxation remains. *The "No-Rent" manifesto is the true gospel of Land Reform*. and becomes realized as soon as the legal process for collection and for ejectment is taken away, and the constable and soldier are withdrawn from enforcing such laws. Only courage and moral purpose in the people are necessary to abolish this great evil; schemes and plans to circumvent it, by indirect means, will prove vain.

G.—But the difficulty still remains. Equal distribution is impossible. Besides, some want much land, others little, and still others none at all. "Nationalization might be changed to Townshipization,"* and so the local government, whatever its form, have control. The large holders would then share, under the system of taxation, with those who held little or none. Each would rent of all, and so the values be equally distributed.

J.—I am very glad to hear you say this. It is one step more in the right direction. This would approach nearly to the township or village community, once the general system of land tenure in Europe. A step or two more will place you on solid ground. The familization and individualization of the land follow as a logical sequence from your admission.

G.—But you do not notice my point that many individuals do not want land at all.

J.—I was about to say that it is untrue. Every individual needs a place to live and work in. Thus far the wants of all are nearly equal. We are "tenants in common," upon the bosom of mother Earth, and no one has any just claim against another for obtaining that which with equal opportunity he declines to appropriate. His refusal to occupy proves that he estimates his advantage greater not to occupy, and that all assumed advantage to the occupier is quite if not more than compensated through reciprocal exchange.

There exists no reason why any one should *hire a home* which does not apply with greater force to the reasons why he should own it. Even a single room can be owned, since it can be hired. Requiring to change his residence, one would experience no more difficulty in finding a purchaser than would the landlord (nation or township) in finding a tenant for it. *Any disposition of the land which does not embrace the private ownership of home* and the normal environment of the individual will not be the final one. Under that, even the changeful and migratory would find no serious inconvenience, while the many would enjoy, in its security and stability, a permanent reliance, and, in its healthful stimulus, the noblest incentives to beautify and adorn the limited portion falling to their control.

* See Henry George in "Irish World" for August 26.

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